ployees of the Department on the pattern of that paid to employees on deputation to MTNL.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) Main features of the agreement in elude assurance to end alleged discrimination, as above, revision of OTA rates and expeditious action on some of the pending staff issues.

Fishing boats captured by Pakistan

785. SHRI VITHALBHAI M. PATEL; Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that during the period from 23rd November, 1990 to 10th December, 1990, some fishing boats with fishermen on board were captured by Pakistan from the sea-water off the shore of Jakhau;

(b)" whether Government have taken any step for the release of the fishermen; and

(c) whether Government have received any representation from Shree Akhil Gujrat Machhimar Mahamandal, Veraval (Gujrat) in this regard, and if so, what action has taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI VIDYA CHARAN SHUKLA); (a) Yes, Sir. Some fishing boats were reported captured off Jakhau.

(b) and (c) The Government has received several representations in this regard including one from Shree Akhil Gujrat Machhimar-Mahamandal, Veraval (Gujrat). The question of the release and repatriation of these fishermen has been taken up with the Government of Pakistan by our Consultants General at Karachi and also by our High Commission in Islamabad. Thin was also taken up at the recently conch ided Foreign Secretary-level talks held at Islamabad from 17th to 20th December, 1990.

Indians stranded on the Iraq-Turkey border

784. SHRI GHUFRAN AZAM; Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state-

(a) whether it is a fact that nearly 700 Indians on the Iraq-Turkey border are still stranded;

(b) whether Government have since asked the Iraqi Government to ascertain the whereabouts of Indians stranded there; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and what further steps Government propose to take to bring them back?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI VIDYA CHARAN" SHUKLA): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. It is a, fact that about 700 Indians were stranded on the Iraq-Turkey border. As a result of intervention by our Embassy in Iraq the Indian nationals who were stranded on the Iraq-Turkey border with their cars have since been given permission by the Government of Iraq to leave the country with their cars.

Ivory poaching in the wildlife sanctuaries in the Southern States

785. SHRI M. S. GURUPADASWA- MY: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whtther it is a fact that ivory poaching in the wildlife sanctuaries in the Southern States in the country has virtually pushed the elephants towards extinction and that according to wildlife researchers the ratio of female and male elephants in the Idduki forests of Kerala is 1: 152;

(b) whether Government have madei any critical study of the modus operandi of the ivory poachers and also to know the extent of involvement of officials of the sanctuaries in the illegal activities of the poachers;